



Diversity and Civic Education

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Chapter 4

Diversity and Civic Education

Meira Levinson

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Educators in the United States are contending with unprecedented levels of diversity in their classrooms as measured by language, culture, race and ethnicity, class, learning and other special needs, ability, motivation, family composition and background, gender and sexual identity, nationality, religion, political ideology, and citizenship status, among other dimensions. These dimensions of diversity present exciting opportunities to help students encounter and wrestle with multiple perspectives, work collaboratively across lines of difference, develop equitable and inclusive habits of interaction, and prepare for globalized life in the twenty-first century. They also present immense challenges. It is hard to figure out how to teach long division to students with vastly different experiences, interests, and capacities. It is even harder to figure out how to teach what it means to be a good citizen, how to act in service of the common good, or how to discuss controversial public issues in such a setting—especially when the polity as a whole disagrees about the answers to these questions. These tasks are further complicated by public rancor over which diverse others should even be included in the civic fold. Muslims, immigrants, those on the ideological far right or left, and those seen as having deviant lifestyles, for example, have all found themselves having to defend their membership in, and identification with, the American polity.

Schools are not unique in grappling with the civic consequences of diversity. But public schools represent especially important and interesting sites for thinking about these consequences and more broadly about the acceptable boundaries of civic diversity and the challenges and opportunities that arise within those limits. Public schools are far and away the most inclusive state institutions that exist in the early twenty-first century. By law, they must accept and attempt to educate virtually every child who lives in their catchment area and is between the ages of approximately six to twenty-one years old. All children in the territorial United States are at least initially guaranteed access to the public schools, regardless of whether they are residents legally or illegally, whether they are citizens, what languages they speak, what resources they have, or what abilities or disabilities they have been diagnosed as possessing.¹ This level of inclusivity means that schools have to navigate among U.S. residents' wildly diverse beliefs, experiences, practices, and values on a regular, even daily basis. Schools have to figure out how to accommodate differences and how to teach students about navigating these differences in ways that are developmentally appropriate, civically constructive, respectful of members' disagreement over these very questions, and legal. They also have to foster students' civic-mindedness—a sense of civic identity, an understanding of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, and a motivation to become civically and politically involved—despite not knowing if their students even are citizens or have the opportunity ever to become a citizen. Furthermore, educators are tasked with achieving these goals despite little public support for, or understanding of, such civic responsibilities, which have become entirely subsumed by college and career preparation in contemporary discourse.

At the same time that public schools navigate the civic opportunities and consequences of being profoundly inclusive institutions, they also set far more restrictive limitations on

membership than those imposed by the polity as a whole. Public schools designate many forms of behavior and even speech as off-limits, using these limits to justify students' temporary removal or permanent expulsion from school. Two obvious and presumably uncontroversial examples include severe bullying and packing heat: students are automatically suspended or expelled for bringing guns, knives, or other weapons to school, despite gun possession's frequently being permitted in other locations. But other examples are far less obvious. Students may be excluded from school for using profanity or lewd language or otherwise disrespecting teachers and other students, violating "zero tolerance" policies by bringing drugs like ibuprofen or a plastic knife to school, wearing clothing or jewelry that is vaguely suspected of being gang-affiliated, or hoisting a "Bong HiTS 4 Jesus" banner at a school-sanctioned off-campus activity.² These exclusions have been upheld on grounds of furthering schools' educational mission—including schools' civic mission to "promote the shared values of a civilized social order" and "a democratic political system."³ In other cases, students with nonmainstream religious beliefs have felt compelled to withdraw from school because their requests for exemption from a piece of the required curriculum were denied. In the *Mozert* case denying children from born-again Christian fundamentalist families the right to sit out a required reading program and complete alternative work in the library, for example, a judge's concurring opinion again relied on civic considerations: "Teaching students about complex and controversial social and moral issues is just as essential for preparing public school students for citizenship and self-government as inculcating in the students the habits and manners of civility."⁴

Public schools thus simultaneously welcome within their walls a more diverse array of students and families than are legally recognized in the polity as a whole, and exclude students and families for behaviors, beliefs, and values that are not only fully legal but even respected in

the broader civil society. Both of these approaches to diversity have civic justifications and civic consequences; they are key to any consideration of schools as engines of civic education. Oddly, however, these characteristics have also been remarkably neglected by those who try to establish principles governing civic education and especially civic membership in schools. The vast majority of writing about civic diversity in public schools tends to equate educational inclusion within the school with political inclusion within the state—a fundamental misunderstanding—and then to obsess around the margins over who is to be included versus excluded.

The basic format is as follows: we encounter an example of a person, family, or group who has anticivic, isolationist, or otherwise off-putting views and ways of life. We are then asked, should we welcome these people in and accommodate them, either because they reveal to us that our own civic values are askew or in the hopes that their children will imbibe some of what we're trying to teach, despite their parents' opposition? Or should we be clear that there are certain givens that anyone who attends public school must accept? Are there families and groups that just can't be accommodated? Alternatively, are there families or groups that must be accommodated—in fact, assimilated—if they are to remain among us? Who are these, and why? Classic cases often focus on religious minorities, such as the Amish in *Yoder v. Wisconsin*, in which Amish teenagers were exempted from state school attendance laws in part on the grounds that the Amish exempted themselves from political life. These cases may also, however, focus on linguistic, political (white supremacist, say), cultural, or other minorities.

Not only are these border-policing cases relatively rare in practice, but they also distract us from the key question surrounding civic diversity in public schools: namely, how to manage such diversity in a developmentally and democratically appropriate way. Diverse schools present an incomparable civic resource for developing democratically oriented, globally competent

citizens who collaborate across lines of difference (habits and skills that we could use more of in Congress these days!). The mere fact of diversity, however, is not enough to promote desirable civic outcomes; to the contrary, as Congress itself demonstrates, citizens often respond to diversity by hardening their own positions and taking refuge in their own presumed superiority. Diverse schools must therefore be intentional and transparent in converting diversity from a potential challenge to a civic educational opportunity.

Even the most intentional and capable school, however, cannot resolve all diversity-related challenges in ways that are civically empowering for all. Perhaps the most potent examples of such challenges are disputes over membership in the civic fold itself. Since many public schools include students who either personally or through family are excluded from broader civic or political membership in some way, public school educators find themselves in the unenviable position of acknowledging diverse voices (many within the school's own walls) raised against some of the very students they are attempting to serve. In such cases, schools cannot remain neutral by staying silent. Rather, they must establish a respectful, welcoming environment in which all students and families feel at home, even if this is denounced as advocacy by those who oppose such inclusion. Schools are responsible for nurturing the children in their care and should assert the value of, and respect due, to each child, independent of the civic consequences.

At times, however, educators, students, and families alike may become exhausted by the constant process of negotiating across lines of difference. Although schools can and should leverage their diversity as a civic resource, the aims of civic education may sometimes be well served through less diversity-oriented and more solidaristic approaches. In such situations, schools' affirmative engagement with diverse students entails the proactive creation of an

environment to which especially minority students can retreat. Students, like adults, need spaces in which they feel normal and at home, where they don't constantly feel that their differences are on display. Solidaristic classes and affinity groups can provide such spaces and, in so doing, support youths' development of a secure and engaged civic identity.

Leveraging Diversity As a Civic Resource

Diversity does not magically breed civic virtue. Diverse schools do not even necessarily help students develop the capacities for peaceful coexistence, the most basic element of citizenship.⁵ Schools can readily end up exacerbating tensions and prejudices among their diverse members rather than resolving or eliminating the conflicts, as is evidenced by the occurrence of racially or ethnically motivated fights, even “race riots” in some highly diverse schools. South Philadelphia High School, for example, was wracked a couple of years ago by intense violence by its majority African American student population against the minority Asian and Asian American students. Asian students and families, who make up a little under a fifth of the total student body, had been complaining for years about being harassed by their African American peers, with teachers either ignoring the problem or even egging it on. Events finally came to a head when as many as seventy mostly African American students attacked dozens of Asian and Asian American students, sending thirteen to the hospital. At a school board meeting following the incident, Ellen Somekawa, the executive director of Asian Americans United, reported the following taunts: “‘Where are you from?’ ‘Hey, Chinese.’ ‘Yo, Bruce Lee.’ ‘Who are you, Dragonballz?’ ‘Speak English.’” She continued, “Those aren't the words of the bad kids. Those are the words of adult staff at South Philadelphia High. So stop blaming the children and start owning the responsibility.”⁶ This is, one hopes, an extreme case. But the lack of news

coverage of this incident and of other examples of violence among students of various ethnoracial, national, linguistic, and even religious groups suggests that the incidents are frequent enough to be ignored.

Even when actual fights are not breaking out, students may well taunt and bully those perceived as others, or self-segregate along group lines. Such self-segregation is visible in many diverse schools, whether on the playground, in the cafeteria, on sports teams and other extracurriculars, or even within the classroom. High schools have highly complex social geographies, in which students of particular ethnoracial or national origin, class, language, identified special ability or disability, or even religion inhabit starkly separate spaces, occupying their segment of school real estate as efficiently and brutally as any army controls its territory. Consider this white student's description of his school's social geography in response to a researcher's question:

By the portables are the white skaters who hang out in the sun. They dress alike and don't care what others think. No one really pays attention to them. They listen to heavy metal and hang where no one else will bother them. The smokers hang out across the street. It's another kind of white student, bound together by their addiction. Mexicans stay far from the administration, close to the street, so they can see their friends who drive by and stop for a while. In the middle are black students, a big group who kid around a lot. They seem to know each other from junior high.⁷

Similar divisions persist in schools across the country; putative student body diversity offers no guarantee that students are actually being educated in, or making friends across, diverse groups. In response to such patterns, in fact, Teaching Tolerance, the educational branch of the Southern Poverty Law Center, now sponsors an annual Mix It Up Day, in which students and teachers are specifically encouraged to breach established social and geographic barriers.

It is not only in schools where diversity may exacerbate as opposed to mitigate social tension and unease. In communities in general, says political scientist Robert Putnam, "the more

we are brought into physical proximity with people of another race or ethnic background, the more we stick to ‘our own’ and the less we trust the ‘other.’”⁸ These civic ills are not minor. Recent research shows that the mere experience of living or being educated in a diverse community may reduce all residents’ civic engagement, trust, altruism, political efficacy, commitments to social justice, and realization of other potential aims of civic education. These negative reactions to diversity are frankly understandable. Diversity can pose real challenges to the achievement of communal life. These challenges are sometimes petty: “I don’t like the music they listen to”; “My neighborhood smells gross now because of the spices they cook with.” They may also be profound: “I think the way he treats his wife is immoral”; “If her views are enshrined in law, I’m afraid that families like mine will be destroyed.” Some are eternal: “I truly believe I will suffer eternal damnation if I countenance—let alone participate in—such behavior.” Any institution, including a school, that tries to promote the benefits of diversity will maintain legitimacy only if it acknowledges these difficulties forthrightly.

But diversity also can offer immense benefits, ones that schools are well-positioned both to realize and to teach if given the right support. Diverse schools hence should not only acknowledge the challenges of diversity, but also openly advocate the civic virtues of living and learning in a diverse community.⁹ After all, diversity is a fact of life in the United States and increasingly in countries worldwide. Young people need guidance and experience in navigating diverse communities to develop the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in political and civil society in the future. This is true at the local and national level, but is also increasingly relevant at the global level. Students live in an interconnected, global world. Now more than ever, they need to develop the knowledge, skills, and inclinations to work together across borders and lines of difference. Furthermore, the integration and even clash of diverse perspectives

ultimately benefits all Americans. Political institutions and civil society in the United States are designed for, and benefit from, diverse viewpoints, passions, areas of expertise, experiences, and ways of life. Effective, inclusive democracies create aggregate wisdom and good judgment from individual citizens' necessarily limited knowledge, skills, and viewpoints.¹⁰ No one person—not even the greatest leader—has all the answers. American institutions are built with this (sometimes controversial) truism in mind. Americans do not believe in philosopher kings.

If diverse schools can focus on helping students learn how to respect and work collaboratively across lines of difference, therefore, they can ensure that students not only acquire a crucial set of civic and political skills, but also develop appropriate democratic attitudes about the value of diversity to a just, equal, and well-run political order. Such schools would help students become comfortable with both superficial and deep differences, which is crucial for effective participation in civic and political life. Schools could teach students that controversy does not necessarily indicate ignorance or inappropriate self-interest on the part of one or more of the parties. All too often, citizens who are frustrated by deep divides among their elected leaders or other groups withdraw from public life altogether. They cry, in effect, “a pox on both their houses!”¹¹ But disagreement is legitimate and necessary. A civil society or political system that consistently displayed consensus would indicate tyranny, or at least oppression of minority and dissident groups, rather than a well-functioning democracy.

In addition to becoming comfortable with controversy, students need to encounter, wrestle with, and ultimately come to value multiple perspectives. It does not advance the cause of democracy for citizens to recognize the inevitability of diverse interests and opinions but nonetheless assume that their own are automatically more valuable and accurate than those of others. Schools should thus capitalize on the diversity within their walls to facilitate highly

supported conversations about controversial topics and different ways of life. They can teach students how to listen carefully, how to ask questions of one another to understand others' perspectives better, how to express their own beliefs and values in a respectful way that others can comprehend, and how to question their own initial assumptions. This isn't an easy process, especially when students' perspectives, experiences, and ways of life are profoundly different from, or even opposed to, one another. But it is essential that students should learn such skills, and hence that schools should teach them, since we cannot assume that citizens will pick up such democratic capacities and inclinations on their own. By drawing upon their schools' diversity as a resource in this way, too, educators can help reduce Americans' self-imposed isolation within ideological, cultural, and even linguistic echo chambers.¹² Students' development of cross-cultural awareness and competencies, respect for multilingualism, and capacities for equitable and inclusive habits of interaction are crucial to prepare them for national democratic and globalized life in the twenty-first century.

Schools need to be intentional, transparent, and vigilant about achieving these goals, since the aims are not easy. But a school does not need to set aside time that is separate from the rest of its curricular and extracurricular activities. Rather, these civic educational goals should be woven throughout schools' curricula, pedagogy, and other practices. One of the most effective means of achieving many of the goals listed above, for example, is the establishment of an open classroom climate in which students feel comfortable and supported taking on controversial points of view and listening to others' perspectives. Research over the past forty years, across dozens of countries, has conclusively demonstrated that students' belief that they are "encouraged to speak openly in class" is "a powerful predictor of their knowledge of and support for democratic values, and their participation in political discussion inside and outside school."¹³

Students' experiences of an open classroom climate are also positively associated with overall civic and political knowledge, intent to vote, likelihood of being an informed voter, expectation of engaging in other political and civic actions, expression of political efficacy and civic duty, comfort with civic and political conflict, interest in politics and attentiveness to current events, and critical thinking and communications skills. These findings are consistent and strong across a wide variety of schools both within the United States and around the world. They also demonstrate the effectiveness of infusing civically engaging and diversity-enhancing practices into classrooms in a way that augments, rather than displaces, other educational goals.

Unfortunately, however, research also shows that students in more diverse settings are less likely to experience an open classroom climate than students in more homogeneous settings, especially students in mostly white, upper-income classrooms or schools.¹⁴ Perhaps open discussions are harder to have when students come in with profoundly different experiences and points of view. Or perhaps students *assume* the classroom climate is open to multiple perspectives when there is little chance that a dissenting voice will be raised, whereas they are more aware of the ways in which students are silenced in classrooms that are self-evidently diverse. Regardless of the reasons, students in diverse classrooms can explicitly be taught how to have respectful discussions about deeply controversial issues.

Project-based learning is another approach that diverse schools can use to facilitate students' capacities to take multiple perspectives and collaborate across lines of difference. In project-based learning, students work in carefully selected and mentored diverse groups to complete a complex, challenging project of mutual concern. When project-based learning is implemented well, students learn how and why to capitalize on one another's distinctive strengths to achieve their goals. A well-designed task is necessarily too great for any one student

to accomplish independently (thus staving off the complaint “They’re just slowing me down! Why can’t I just do it myself?”). It also draws upon a wide variety of knowledge and skills to reflect the diversity present in the classroom. These may include local knowledge about a neighborhood, event, or way of life; bilingualism or biculturalism; interpersonal skills; and other contributions that enable students to discover the benefits of working in a diverse group. Still other approaches to teaching students to value diverse others include school-community partnerships that ensure the inclusion of diverse voices in school decision-making and robust extracurricular opportunities in which diverse students can get to know one another in a neutral context organized around a shared passion for, say, tennis, manga, or cooking.

Accommodating Diversity As a Civic Educational Responsibility

The capacities to take multiple perspectives and otherwise respect diversity do not in and of themselves resolve many of the challenges surrounding diversity in schools. One of the hardest controversies for students and schools to navigate is defining the appropriate limits of diversity itself in a democratic society. Consider debates such as whether otherwise law-abiding, undocumented immigrants should be incarcerated while they await deportation hearings and appeals, whether same-sex couples should have the right to marry, whether polygamy should remain illegal, or whether Muslim girls or women should be allowed to wear full hijab in schools and other state institutions (a debate that has roiled Western Europe). These are debates not only about policy, but also about individuals’ membership in the polity. Are these individuals and groups full members of civil and political society or not?

One feature that makes these debates especially tricky in schools is that those whose membership in the polity is being challenged are also often students and family members present

within the school itself. For example, there are currently about 5.5 million children of undocumented immigrant parents in the United States. If they were spread evenly around the country, each classroom would have at least one child with an undocumented parent or parents. Although these students are more clustered than that—over 10 percent of students in Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, and Texas have undocumented parents, for example, while the percentage is much lower in most other states—schools around the country are nonetheless unaware of the legal status of children and their parents. Because they have the obligation to educate all children resident in the United States, public schools are usually forbidden from asking about families' citizenship or immigrant status, and undocumented parents certainly do not volunteer the information!¹⁵ As a result, these children, nearly 4 million of whom are citizens themselves, constitute an invisible but unmistakable presence in many public schools.¹⁶

Consider what it means for these children to listen to their peers advocate for their own parents' incarceration and deportation. Similarly, consider the effects on children in school—U.S. citizens—to hear themselves described as “anchor babies” while being told that the Fourteenth Amendment should be reinterpreted to deny citizenship to other children like themselves. These young people experience such claims not just as reasonable disputes about contentious policy matters, but as a rejection of the foundations of their citizenship, their families' membership in the community, their fundamental identity. One college student describes his experience:

The immigration debate rules my life. It goes beyond politics or law; it defines me . . . I am the child of immigrants, and I have witnessed the plight of undocumented immigration in this country . . . When I pick sides on this debate, this is what I think about. I don't think about politics, policies, laws, or statistics. I think about my family, my friends, my community, and myself . . . A close friend, the daughter of refuted immigrants, once told me that after everything she has heard about “illegal aliens destroying America,” she felt so filthy, dirty and unworthy that she wanted to peel her own skin off. I don't expect sympathy, just a small understanding of the situation.¹⁷

In the case of undocumented immigrants and their children, youths and families find their literal citizenship challenged. In the case of gay parents and children, however, it is their symbolic and experiential citizenship that comes under attack. Current debates over gay rights offer a good example of this second kind of tussling over the limits of civic diversity. U.S. citizens and residents who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) are no longer at risk of being stripped of their basic citizenship rights, including their freedom of movement and association.¹⁸ But many aspects of full civic membership have still eluded LGBT citizens. It was only in September 2011, for example, that lesbian, gay, and bisexual (although not transgender) citizens became eligible publicly to fulfill one of the most profound rites of citizenship: namely, serving in the armed forces. Furthermore, the federal government and vast majority of states continue to refuse lesbian and gay citizens the rights or recognition of civil marriage. Thanks to the federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), they are hence required to declare themselves single on tax returns and other federal documents, despite in many cases being legally married according to state law. In these respects, even fully enfranchised LGBT citizens are not treated as civic equals.

Many schools recognize the bitter and damaging sense of exclusion that LGBT youth, and children with LGBT parents and other family members, may feel in response to these limitations and to the severe bullying that often accompanies these more symbolic exclusions from civic membership. The 2009 National School Climate Survey, for example, found that 85 percent of LGBT students reported being verbally harassed, four in ten were physically harassed, and almost one in five reported being physically assaulted at school because of their sexual orientation. LGBT youth are also known to have significantly higher rates of depression and attempted and actual suicide. In response, over four thousand U.S. middle and high schools host

Gay-Straight Alliances and other support groups intent on building positive, inclusive, and welcoming contexts for LGBT students, families, and allied straight friends. On the other hand, this number represents less than 15 percent of the thirty-seven thousand middle and high schools nationwide.¹⁹ Especially in communities with a diverse array of views ranging from pro-LGBT families to a belief that homosexuality is an illness or sin from which individuals can “recover” by becoming straight, schools often take refuge in silence.²⁰

Anoka-Hennepin School District No. S1 in Minnesota has been in the news, for example, thanks to its policy of curricular “neutrality” regarding sexual orientation: “Teaching about sexual orientation is not a part of the District adopted curriculum; rather, such matters are best addressed within individual family homes, churches, or community organizations. Anoka-Hennepin staff, in the course of their professional duties, shall remain neutral on matters regarding sexual orientation including but not limited to student led discussions.”²¹ Although this policy did not restrict students from speaking up or organizing, and there are Gay-Straight Alliances in some local high schools, six students nonetheless filed lawsuits in July 2011 charging in part that the curriculum-neutrality policy “fostered oppressive silence and a corrosive stigma.”²² Nine students, many of whom were gay or perceived by others to be gay, had committed suicide in just the previous two years. LGBT-identified students reported being verbally and physically harassed, even urinated on, by other students, with teachers and administrators responding by trying to minimize interactions between the bullies and those being bullied. An adopted son of two gay fathers, for example, was directed to leave classes a few minutes early to avoid harassment in the hallways. One of his fathers plaintively told a newspaper reporter, “We’re not asking them to promote anything. But if a kid has gay parents, or is gay or lesbian, why can’t the school say, ‘You’re O.K.’?” In the same newspaper article, Tom

Prichard of the Minnesota Family Council counters: “Saying that you should accept two moms as a normal family—that would be advocacy. There should be no tolerance of bullying, but these groups are using the issue to try to press a social agenda.”²³

Silence on the part of the school clearly isn’t an answer—but schools may find themselves at sea in strongly contested areas of civic membership. I began this section with the example of undocumented immigrants to underscore in part how difficult it can be for schools to say, “You’re OK” to all of their students and families. As a legal matter, these students and families are *not* okay. They are living illegally within U.S. borders. Now, I personally believe that U.S. immigration policy is both inhumane and self-defeating and that the nation must overhaul its immigration laws to offer all residents—including those who are here illegally—a controlled path to citizenship. In this respect, I also support the DREAM Act (Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act), which would enable undocumented children who have been in the country for at least five years to gain legal permanent residency (a first step toward citizenship) through military service or college attendance. But my personal views are irrelevant with respect to the messages that schools can send to students. Schools cannot declare that illegal immigration is itself okay. Similarly, I strongly believe that LGBT rights are human rights. I think that DOMA is a travesty, that all states and the federal government should legalize same-sex marriage, and that discriminating against people for their sexual orientation or gender identity is as reprehensible as discriminating against someone based on the person’s race or ethnicity. In many ways, because being LGBT is itself finally fully legal, I feel on much firmer footing to declare that schools should also take clear public stands in favor of LGBT students and families, declaring not only to them in particular, but also to the nation as a whole, “You’re OK.” But Prichard is right; this is advocacy, not mere neutrality.

Furthermore, advocates of LGBT rights mislead themselves in thinking that sheer enlightenment is the key to resolving such questions or that the eventual extension of LGBT rights nationwide will bring such dilemmas to a close. Charges of moral, behavioral, or social deviance will always be used to justify excluding some people from full (or even partial) civic membership. No matter what one's political ideology, there are limits to the reach of diversity that people accept in a society or state. Currently in Holland, homophobia is diagnosed as deviance. Prospective immigrants to Holland are required to watch a video that shows images of the Dutch way of life, including shots of two men kissing openly in a park. If the viewers express discomfort with the images, they are refused permission to immigrate. (Many observers believe that the real impetus is to discourage Muslims from immigrating to Holland, as opposed to discouraging homophobes per se.) In France, Muslim girls' choice to wear a head scarf is seen as civically deviant; they are refused entry to public schools unless they remove their scarf. In the United States, personal recreational drug use is judged sufficiently socially deviant as to justify denial of access to federal student loans, termination of parental rights, and the risk of lifetime incarceration.

Polygamy provides another interesting case of the contemporary limits of civic diversity in the United States. Many passionate advocates of LGBT rights and other sexual and family structure freedoms draw the line at polygamy, usually on feminist grounds. According to a 2007 Gallup poll, 90 percent of Americans view polygamy as "morally wrong."²⁴ Nonetheless, there are around a hundred thousand members of "plural," or polygamous, families currently living in the United States. Many of these members are children. The families hail from a variety of faiths; contrary to popular perception, American polygamy is not confined to fundamentalist Mormons. Many Muslims also believe that polygamy is condoned or even encouraged by the Koran—a

perspective that accounts for polygamy's legality in most African and Muslim countries worldwide. Because of both religious convictions and sociocultural factors, some black Muslims and immigrant African Muslims in the United States have also embraced plural families.

These Muslim and Mormon families are spread around the country; recent news articles have featured plural families in New York, Philadelphia, Utah, and Texas. Such families almost never reveal their status to state officials, such as public school teachers or administrators. After all, polygamy is illegal nationwide, and even a penchant for polygamy can be considered sufficient justification for denial of an immigration visa. No polygamists are supposed to be admitted to the United States (or many other countries).²⁵ Children from polygamous families hence pose challenges similar to the aforementioned challenges of undocumented or gay families. They attend public schools, are often invisible and hence unrecognized, and are members of families that are seen in some communities as civically deviant, even criminal. What principles can guide schools' approaches to such students in diverse and civically contested contexts?

To begin with, public schools must embrace their own students, regardless of these students' and families' legal status or membership in civil society. Schools are duty bound as a matter of law and ethics to support each one of their students as the children learn and grow academically, socially, emotionally, and physically. For a stable and democratic state to do anything else would be fundamentally to transgress against children's rights as vulnerable, developing human beings. As a matter of educational practice, this also means that schools need to model and foster—nay, insist on—respect toward all students and families, no matter how diverse. Children cannot be nurtured academically while being pilloried socially and emotionally. Their positive development is not fostered in classrooms that simultaneously make

them want to “peel [their] own skin off.” As a consequence, schools cannot follow a policy of strict neutrality when students’ and families’ identities are openly under attack in the civic sphere. Neutrality is a cold accommodation. Students and families should be welcomed with a warm, inclusive embrace, not just by educators and other school officials, but by the school community as a whole.

How can such an approach be squared with concerns—or even opposition—from diverse other students, parents, and community members regarding these students’ inclusion in the civic sphere? In part, this can be achieved by insisting on the distinction between the educational sphere of the public school and the civic sphere of the state. State educational institutions are not microcosms of the state itself. To insist that all students and families should be welcomed into the community of the public school, therefore, is not to take a stand on groups’ political status or civic membership more broadly. Second, it is important to remind all members of the school community that no one is defined by a single characteristic. We all have multiple identities. An undocumented immigrant may also be a loving father, a skilled craftsman, an upstanding taxpayer, a community translator, and a damn good softball coach. A gay student may also be captain of the debate team and an empathetic peer tutor. When a school models and teaches its members to embrace all children within its fold, therefore, it need not insist that all teachers and students openly embrace the very characteristics they view as morally or civically deviant. Rather, it can emphasize other valued characteristics of diverse students and families—skills, ways of life, and other traits that are valued by the larger community. This is admittedly an imperfect solution—“Mrs. Jones may be oppressed by being a second wife, but she’s a great PTA fund-raiser!” is not a model of inclusive respect—but it also may be the best a school community can achieve under the circumstances.

Annoka-Hennepin School District continues to provide an instructive example, as the lawsuits and negative publicity led the school board finally to jettison its Sexual Orientation Curriculum Policy in February 2012. The district's new Respectful Learning Environment Curriculum Policy, adopted the same month, opens with the school board's commitment to "providing an education that respects all students and families." It ends by declaring that "district staff shall affirm the dignity and selfworth of all students" during any discussion of "contentious" issues. No longer singling out sexuality as a problematic topic nor mandating teacher silence, the district instead requires that "Curricular discussions of such issues shall be appropriate to the maturity and developmental level of students; be of significance to course content; and be presented in an impartial, balanced and objective manner, allowing respectful exchange of varying points of view. Lessons shall be designed to help students think critically and develop decision-making skills and techniques for examining and understanding differing opinions."²⁶ Although those advocating for LGBT students and families view it as a significant step forward, the policy faces critics from multiple sides. One school board member denounced the Respectful Learning Environment Curriculum Policy as "caving into the demands of homosexual activists" and promptly resigned. On the other side of the aisle, the Southern Poverty Law Center and the National Center for Lesbian Rights, which had filed the lawsuits on behalf of the stigmatized students, released a statement expressing its preference "for the District to have repealed this stigmatizing policy without replacing it." They further cautioned that the repeal is "an important first step, but the District must do much more to create a safe, welcoming, and respectful learning environment for all students."²⁷ This goal, when applied to students whose very presence is considered anathema by other members of the community, remains a challenge in Annoka-Hennepin and across the nation.

When Diversity Falters: Self-Segregation As a Tool for Civic Education

Ultimately, it is a mistake to think that every civic difference can be resolved or even accommodated in diverse contexts if people just try hard enough—if they work to understand one another, look past differences and celebrate their commonalities, and try to take the other person’s point of view when they feel offended or wronged. At times, therefore, citizens choose to retreat, to hunker down in a community in which they feel at home and understood, where they don’t need to prove their civic bona fides by reminding others that they are good craftsmen, peer tutors, or softball coaches, but rather, where just being themselves is good enough.²⁸ The support found in such communities often also gives members the strength to engage with the wider world, to take civic action with the confidence built on collective solidarity with others. As noted above, social self-segregation of this sort occurs in diverse schools all the time. Students seek solidarity by clustering with others who share their language, culture, ethnoracial designation, religion, politics, or other salient characteristics. Schools with effective civic education programs will dissolve these boundaries by teaching students how to communicate with and learn from a variety of diverse others. But enforced diversity is not the only option, especially when there are massive power and status differentials among groups.

Rather, effective and equalizing civic education is sometimes best achieved in solidaristic groups that seek a temporary sanctuary within diverse settings, creating civic narratives and practices that empower their own members. Probably the most prominent historical example of this approach is the civic education offered by black churches, fraternal organizations, and Freedom Schools. For over a century, these institutions have provided a nurturing and affirming space in which to teach their members about African Americans’ ongoing struggle against

oppression and injustice, the opportunities this struggle has brought black Americans, and people's obligation to continue the struggle through civic and political engagement. This approach to civic education is culturally specific and solidaristic. It also probably accounts for African Americans' historically high rates of civic and political engagement, which throughout most of the twentieth century were proportionally higher than those of any other ethnoracial group in the United States.²⁹ Evangelical Christian organizations have been similarly effective over the past thirty years in mobilizing members to become civically and politically engaged through solidaristic affirmation and education. After-school clubs like Christian Fellowship and 100 Black Men have extended this kind of group-oriented civic engagement work to middle and high schools. They are joined by legions of other affinity groups by race and ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender, and other identity markers.

Perhaps the most riveting and contentious contemporary example of solidaristic civic education has been playing out in Tucson, Arizona. The Tucson Unified School District (TUSD) has offered ethnic studies electives in history and a variety of other subjects for over two decades; the electives were developed and bolstered by its district-wide African American, Mexican American, Native American, and Pan Asian Studies Departments. These departments were created as part of the "unitary status" agreement drawn up to release the district from judicial oversight over its desegregation policies. Ethnic studies courses have explicit goals of increasing students' academic and civic engagement, as well as of promoting social justice and other civic ends. Mexican American Studies (MAS), for example, follows a model of "Critically Compassionate Intellectualism," which "combines curriculum (using counter-hegemonic content), pedagogy, and student-teacher interaction (authentic caring) as a model for increased academic achievement for Latino students."³⁰

One such MAS course has been an eleventh-grade humanities block, Chicano Studies/Literature, which students at Tucson High Magnet School could elect in place of American History and Junior English. The course is organized around a “Xikano Paradigm” containing four elements: “*Tezkatlipoka*—self-reflection”; “*Quetzalkoatl*—precious and beautiful knowledge”; “*Huitzilopochtli*—the will to act”; and “*Xipe Totek*—transformation.” Within the literature segment of the course, students studied and wrote personal narratives and counternarratives, a social justice research paper, literary analyses, a character analysis, speeches, and rhetorical analyses. Students were expected to complete projects that brought their classroom learning into “the community and focus their efforts to change the world in which they live.”³¹ Like all MAS courses, Chicano Studies/Literature was a purely elective course and served a disproportionately high but not entirely Latino student body.³²

In 2007, TUSD’s MAS courses came under attack by Tom Horne, then Arizona’s superintendent of public instruction and now the state’s attorney general. Horne began by writing “An Open Letter to the Citizens of Tucson,” in which he called on them to eliminate Mexican American, or Raza, Studies on the grounds that it teaches “destructive ethnic chauvinism,” Mexican rather than U.S. perspectives on history, and anticivic beliefs that the United States oppresses Chicanos, among other ills. “Those students should be taught that this is the land of opportunity, and that if they work hard they can achieve their goals. They should not be taught that they are oppressed.”³³ When the citizens of Tucson failed to take Horne up on his suggestion, he turned to the Arizona legislature, which passed a bill in 2010 mandating that no Arizona public school district or charter school may

include in its program of instruction any courses or classes that include any of the following:

1. Promote the overthrow of the United States government.
2. Promote resentment toward a race or class of people.

3. Are designed primarily for pupils of a particular ethnic group.
4. Advocate ethnic solidarity instead of the treatment of pupils as individuals.³⁴

Any district found out of compliance loses up to 10 percent of its funding from the state; in TUSD's case, this amounts to well over \$1 million per month.

Throughout 2011, TUSD battled with the Arizona Department of Education and the Arizona Attorney General's office over whether Tucson's MAS courses did violate state law. The same day that Horne left the Department of Education to take up his new position as attorney general, John Huppenthal, who had campaigned on a "stop la raza" platform, took his place as state superintendent of public instruction. Both Horne and Huppenthal immediately declared TUSD in violation of the law, a position that they maintained steadfastly in the months that followed. "Reviewed Mexican American Studies Program materials repeatedly emphasize the importance of building Latino nationalism and unity versus identifying students as individuals," Huppenthal claimed in June.³⁵ He reached this conclusion, despite the concurrently released findings of an independent audit that Huppenthal commissioned, which concluded that the MAS courses have "been proven to treat student[s] as individuals," fully comply with state law, and also enhance students' academic outcomes, including their performance on state standardized tests in reading and writing, and their graduation rates.³⁶ For instance, students who took MAS courses were 5 to 11 percent more likely to graduate than comparable students who do not enroll in such courses; juniors who failed the state standardized test as sophomores but then enroll in MAS courses were also significantly more likely to pass the test than those who did not take MAS classes.³⁷ Although many MAS advocates initially resisted the audit on the grounds that Huppenthal had hired a corporate tool to support his own agenda, MAS advocates of course have now publicized the audit results as evidence that ethnic studies courses are both civically and academically desirable parts of the TUSD curriculum.

In January 2012, TUSD ran out of options to appeal Huppenthal's judgment that MAS courses violated Arizona House Bill 2281. The classes were immediately shut down, with books, curricular materials, and even elementary school students' dioramas about famous Mexican Americans being seized from the classrooms, in some cases in front of students. Curtis Acosta, who taught Chicano Literature, sent out an e-mail explaining that "we have been told that we cannot teach any race, ethnic or oppression themed lessons or units. However, there has been no specific guidance and since our pedagogy is also deemed 'illegal' than [sic] we are not sure HOW to teach either. I asked if I could start teaching Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and was told no, due to the themes that are present and the likelihood of avoiding discussions of colonization, enslavement, and racism were remote."³⁸ MAS teachers, now assigned to teach non-MAS courses, have been instructed to teach no Chicano, Latin American, or Spanish author. Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and Sandra Cisneros' *House on Mango Street* are two of the dozens of books that have been explicitly banned. Teachers have been instructed not to teach about or mention social justice, discrimination, or racism; students' work in former MAS classes is regularly collected and reviewed by the district; and monitors have been placed in front of and within classrooms to ensure that no outlawed concepts are mentioned by teachers or students. "It's a really awkward environment. We're walking on eggshells," one student explained in late February. "We have monitors following us...making sure we're not saying bad things, we're not organizing anything. It's not how things should be." Another student explained that it was impossible to ask her former-MAS teachers questions, because "then they'd have to answer" and potentially risk treading on outlawed topics.³⁹

There is substantial evidence that MAS' elimination is a consequence of Horne's, Huppenthal's, and their supporters' outsized expression of anti-Chicano racism.⁴⁰ To the extent

that this is a principled disagreement, however, the dispute seems to come down to whether politically minority perspectives are inherently more divisive or biased than those presented by the political majority or elite. For example, the curriculum audit describes the MAS Department as being “firmly committed to the following” list of goals “with an academic focus”:

- Advocating for and providing culturally relevant curriculum for grades K-12.
- Advocating for and providing curriculum that is centered within the pursuit of social justice.
- Advocating for and providing curriculum that is centered within the Mexican American/Chicano cultural and historical experience.
- Working towards the invoking of a critical consciousness within each and every student.
- Providing and promoting teacher education that is centered within Critical Pedagogy, Latino Critical Race Pedagogy, and Authentic Caring.
- Promoting and advocating for social and educational transformation.
- Promoting and advocating for the demonstration of respect, understanding, appreciation, inclusion, and love at every level of service.⁴¹

These are incontrovertibly non-mainstream goals that promote solidaristic approaches to academic and civic empowerment. But they are also grounded in solid social science research about the positive effects of ethnoracially conscious and solidaristic identities, curricula, and activism on minority students’ and adults’ academic and civic success.⁴² One Latino student recounts his experience when a teacher put an apple in front of the class and asked what they saw: “All the students were saying well, it’s an apple. It’s red. It’s big. And a student of his said, ‘I see my family working in the fields all day.’ It’s empowering. It makes me feel proud that I can come from a background as the class taught me, the culture that I have, and I can actually go on and do something.”⁴³ The MAS Department’s goals and outcomes are hence particularly salutary, one might argue, in light of Latino youths’ persistent position at or near the bottom of both the academic achievement gap and the civic empowerment gap.⁴⁴

Furthermore, accusations of inappropriate bias hold water only if one considers traditional American history and literature courses totally unbiased, not grounded in other

(almost always white) ethnoracial norms. These are implausible claims—equally implausible as Anoka-Hennepin School District’s declaration of curricular neutrality over issues of homosexuality. Silence in the face of massive power imbalances and historic discrimination is not neutral. When State Superintendent Huppenthal asserts, “We all have an obligation to make a better society, and not characterize it in racial terms. It’s that racial identity that we have a problem with. It’s not appropriate. It’s not historically accurate,”⁴⁵ he seems to be suggesting that it’s even possible to teach American history in a way that is independent of students’ racial identities. This simply isn’t true. Students’ (and adults’) ethnoracial identities are unavoidably bound up in how they learn, place themselves within, and draw civic lessons from American history.⁴⁶ To design an MAS course that is culturally relevant, therefore, is simply to make explicit the implicit white cultural relevance of mainstream American history courses. Such ethnic studies courses also enable students to escape the cold accommodation of spurious neutrality by moving into the warm embrace of culturally relevant, transparent, and empowering education. This is positive for all concerned.

Another stumbling block between ethnic studies advocates and opponents is their contrasting interpretations of students’ political engagement over preserving the MAS program. Horne was originally inspired to write his letter to the citizens of Tucson after civil rights icon Dolores Huerta declared in a speech at Tucson High School that “Republicans hate Latinos.” Horne arranged for Margaret Dugan, a Latina Republican official in the Arizona Department of Education, to rebut Huerta’s claims the following week, but during Dugan’s speech, some Tucson High students turned their backs to her, taped their mouths shut, or raised their fists in the air (or did all three) to protest Dugan’s refusal to take student questions. These students’ behavior provoked Horne’s letter and then his drafting of the state legislation. Since then, ethnic

studies students in Arizona have been arrested while refusing to leave a state school board meeting until they were given leave to speak; held walkouts, sit-ins, and other protests around the state; used YouTube, social media, and a 110 mile run from Tucson to Phoenix in the blazing Arizona heat to organize and publicize their cause; and filed a federal lawsuit in conjunction with some MAS teachers, requesting a stay of the state law. These combined actions have suggested uncivil hordes to some observers, including Horne, who called MAS “racist propaganda . . . fed to young and impressionable students, who swallow them whole, as illustrated by the rude behavior of some students during an address by Margaret Garcia Dugan and subsequent demonstrations. The education they are receiving, to deal with disagreements in an uncivil manner, will be dysfunctional for them as adults.”⁴⁷ On the other hand, students’ passionate civic and political engagement in Save Ethnic Studies, No History Is Illegal, and similar organizations has been seen by others as a welcome broadening of democracy. Students’ commitment to standing up for a curriculum they believe challenges, engages, nurtures, and prepares them for success in college and in American society demonstrates exactly the kind of civic engagement that would ideally be displayed by all citizens. In this respect, their mastery of multiple forms of civic action—sit-ins, rallies, public demonstrations, testimonials in public meetings, submission of written and oral testimony to government officials, strategic use of social media, walk-outs, legal action, and even willingness to be arrested and jailed for their peaceful civil disobedience—exemplifies the success of these courses in promoting engaged American citizenship.

Conclusion

Diverse public schools represent the public, serve the public, and to a large extent reflect the public. In these respects, they often find themselves grappling with the same civic challenges

faced by the public as a whole: namely, how to work in a democratic context with people whose viewpoints, values, and ways of life are so diverse as to be diametrically opposed at times. Public schools do a disservice to their students if they pretend that diversity poses no such civic challenges. On the other hand, schools provide both their students and the polity as a whole a tremendous public service when they do teach students how to work together respectfully, collaboratively, and intentionally across multiple lines of difference. Such civic education is essential for the establishment and maintenance of a just and well-functioning democracy.

At the same time, public schools are not mirrors of the public; even more to the point, they do not restrict their services solely to those deemed full members of the public. This places schools in the politically and pedagogically awkward position of trying to provide inclusive services, including an inclusive civic education, to those who are excluded from literal or symbolic citizenship. In these cases, public schools' obligations are first and foremost the children they serve as opposed to the polity they represent. Furthermore, by emphasizing the respect due to all human beings plus the multiple identities all people inhabit, public school educators can at least in part square the circle of providing a nonpartisan civic education about peaceful coexistence to all students and families, despite their diverse viewpoints. These civic lessons must be inclusive, intentional, and overt. Schools cannot retreat into silence. Silence teaches lessons of its own—lessons that are no more neutral for being implicit rather than explicit. Finally, in achieving a fully inclusive and empowering civic education for all citizens, schools and students may sometimes legitimately decide to establish and seek out settings that promote civic solidarity rather than an all-encompassing diversity. Such settings must ultimately serve democratic civic ends that equip students to work collaboratively in diverse communities.

But an emphasis especially on politically minority perspectives may sometimes be necessary for promoting students' equal capacities to engage in diverse democratic settings.

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¹ These rights are guaranteed in a combination of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; *Plyler v. Doe*, 457 U.S. 202 (1982); *Lau v. Nichols*, 414 U.S. 563 (1974); the Elementary and Secondary Education Act; and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, among other legislative and court-ordered mechanisms.

² See Tony Fabelo et al., *Breaking Schools' Rules: A Statewide Study of How School Discipline Relates to Students' Success and Juvenile Justice Involvement* (New York: Council of State Governments Justice Center, 2011); Advancement Project, *Test, Punish, and Push Out: How 'Zero Tolerance' and High-Stakes Tests Funnel Youth into the School-to-Prison Pipeline* (Washington, DC, and Los Angeles: Advancement Project, 2010); *Morse v. Frederick*, 551 U.S. 393 (2007). One year when I was teaching eighth grade, for example, one of my homeroom students was suspended and ultimately prevented from attending her middle school graduation, because she left a bicycle chain lock she occasionally wore as a necklace hanging in her locker. It was treated as a potentially dangerous—and concealed—weapon.

³ *Bethel School District No. 403 v. Fraser*, 478 U. S. 675, 683 (1986).

⁴ Cornelia G. Kennedy, Concurring Opinion, *Mozert v. Hawkins County School Board*, 827 F.2d 1058 (1987), available at www.soc.umn.edu/~samaha/cases/mozert_v_hawkins_schools.html.

⁵ See Meira Levinson, "Common Schools and Multicultural Education," *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 41, no. 4 (2007): 625–642, for a more expansive discussion of this challenge.

⁶ Michel Martin, "Racial Tensions Grow Violent at Philly High School," *Tell Me More*, December 16, 2009, www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=121506559; Jesse Washington, "Racial Violence Changes Student—and School," *msnbc.com*, September 5, 2010, www.msnbc.msn.com/id/39017234/ns/us_news/t/racial-violence-changes-student-school/#.

⁷ Laurie Olsen, "Racialization: The Contemporary Americanization Project," in *E Pluribus Unum? Contemporary and Historical Perspectives on Immigrant Political Incorporation*, ed. Gary Gerstle and John Mollenkopf (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2001), 371–411 (quotation from p. 388). Olsen's study provides a fascinating example of immigrant bilingual students' social maps of their school as compared to those of native-born "American" students; the former are far more detailed than the latter, which tend to lump all immigrant students together in an undifferentiated mass.

⁸ Robert D. Putnam, "E Pluribus Unum: Diversity and Community in the Twenty-First Century—the 2006 Johan Skytte Prize Lecture," *Scandinavian Political Studies* 30, no. 2 (2007): 137–174. See also David E. Campbell, "Sticking Together: Classroom Diversity and Civic

Education,” *American Politics Research* 35, no. 1 (2007): 57–78; Levinson, “Common Schools and Multicultural Education.”

⁹ Diverse communities can bring about noncivic benefits, too; I’m just focusing on civic issues in this chapter.

¹⁰ Josiah Ober, *Democracy and Knowledge: Innovation and Learning in Classical Athens* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010); James Surowiecki, *The Wisdom of Crowds* (New York: Random House, 2005).

¹¹ John R. Hibbing and Elizabeth Theiss-Morse, *Stealth Democracy: Americans’ Beliefs About How Government Should Work* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

¹² Bill Bishop, with Robert G. Cushing, *The Big Sort: Why the Clustering of Like-Minded America Is Tearing Us Apart* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2008).

¹³ Judith Torney-Purta et al., *Citizenship and Education in Twenty-Eight Countries: Civic Knowledge and Engagement at Age Fourteen* (Amsterdam: IEA, 2001), 137. See also Diana E. Hess, “Teaching About Same-Sex Marriage As a Policy and Constitutional Issue,” *Social Education* 73, no. 7 (2009): 344–349.

¹⁴ See Meira Levinson, *No Citizen Left Behind* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012) for a comprehensive summary and analysis of this research.

¹⁵ A 2011 Alabama House of Representatives bill is an exception to this. The Beason-Hammon Alabama Taxpayer and Citizen Protection Act (HB56) requires all public schools to collect data on students’ and families’ citizenship status. The social chaos that has ensued, however—including overnight increases of 5–10 percent in student absentee rates in some districts—has led to a bipartisan call for repeal of at least pieces of the law.

¹⁶ Hirokazu Yoshikawa, *Immigrants Raising Citizens: Undocumented Parents and Their Young Children* (New York: Russell Sage, 2011); Jeffrey S. Passel and D’Vera Cohn, *A Portrait of Unauthorized Immigrants in the United States* (Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center, 2009), <http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/107.pdf>.

¹⁷ Jayne Jaramillo, “Children of the Undocumented,” *The Student Voice*, Syracuse University, April 10, 2010, <http://studentvoicesu.wordpress.com/2010/04/10/childrenof-the-undocumented/>.

¹⁸ This is notably a relatively recent occurrence; it was only in 2003 that the Supreme Court invalidated all remaining adult antisodomy laws, for instance.

¹⁹ Joseph G. Kosciw et al., *The 2009 National School Climate Survey: The Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Youth in Our Nation’s Schools* (New York: GLSEN, 2010); Suicide Prevention Resource Center, *Suicide Risk and Prevention for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth* (Newton, MA: Education Development Center, Inc., 2008); Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network, “Background and Information About Gay-Straight Alliances,” n.d., www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/library/record/2336.html?state=media&type=media; National Center for Education Statistics, “Public Elementary and Secondary Schools, by Type of School: Selected Years, 1967–1968 through 2008–2009,” table 97 in *Digest of Education Statistics, 2010 (NCES 2011-015)* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 2011).

²⁰ Silence would actually be a luxury in some states. An Arizona statute prohibits schools from employing material that “portrays homosexuality as a positive alternative lifestyle.” See Arizona Revised Statutes, § 15-716(C)(1)–(3), www.azleg.state.az.us/ars/15/00716.htm. Texas requires schools to tell minors that “homosexual conduct is not an acceptable lifestyle and is a criminal offense under Section 21.06, Penal Code,” even though Section 21.06 was invalidated by *Lawrence v. Texas*. See Texas Health and Safety Code, Section 85.007(b)(2), www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/HS/htm/HS.85.htm. South Carolina’s health education classes “may not include a discussion of alternate sexual lifestyles from heterosexual relationships, including, but not limited to, homosexual relationships except in the context of instruction concerning sexually transmitted diseases.” See South Carolina Code of Laws, Section 59-32-30(A)(5), www.scstatehouse.gov/code/t59c032.php.

²¹ Anoka-Hennepin District No. 11, “Sexual Orientation Curriculum Policy” (Coon Rapids, MN: Anoka-Hennepin District No. 11, 2009).

²² Erik Eckholm, “In Suburb, Battle Goes Public on Bullying of Gay Students,” *New York Times*, September 13, 2011, www.nytimes.com/2011/09/13/us/13bully.html.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Lydia Saad, “Americans Rate the Morality of 16 Social Issues,” Gallup, June 4, 2007, www.gallup.com/poll/27757/Americans-Rate-Morality-Social-Issues.aspx.

²⁵ Pamela Constable, “For Some Muslim Wives, Abuse Knows No Borders,” *Washington Post*, May 8, 2007, www.washingtonpost.com/wpdyn/content/article/2007/05/07/AR2007050701936.html; Barbara Bradley Hagerty, “Some Muslims in U.S. Quietly Engage in Polygamy,” *All Things Considered*, May 27, 2008, www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=90857818&ps=rs. See also *Wikipedia*, s.v. “Legal status of polygamy,” last modified March 1, 2012, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legal_status_of_polygamy.

²⁶ Sue Austreng, “Respectful Learning Environment Focus of Anoka-Hennepin’s New Curriculum Policy,” *Press & News*, February 15, 2012, www.pressnews.com/articles/2012/02/26/regional_headlines/00ahrlecp.txt.

²⁷ Maria Elena Baca, “Anoka-Hennepin School District Settles Bullying Lawsuit,” *Star Tribune*, March 6, 2012, www.startribune.com/local/north/141427303.html?page=all&prepage=1&c=y#continue; Sabina Rubin Erdely, “One Town’s War on Gay Teens,” *Rolling Stone*, February 2, 2012, www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/one-towns-war-on-gay-teens-20120202.

²⁸ Putnam, “E Pluribus Unum.”

²⁹ I develop these arguments in much greater detail in Levinson, *No Citizen Left Behind*, chap. 3.

³⁰ Tucson Unified School District, “Mexican American Studies—About Us,” last updated December 29, 2010, www.tusd1.org/contents/depart/mexicanam/about.asp.

³¹ Curtis Acosta, “Developing Critical Consciousness: Resistance Literature in a Chicano Literature Class,” *English Journal* 97, no. 2 (2007): 37–38, 41.

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- ³² Cambium Learning Inc., *Curriculum Audit of the Mexican American Studies Department Tucson Unified School District* (Miami Lakes, FL: Cambium Learning, 2011), 5–6.
- ³³ Tom Horne, “An Open Letter to the Citizens of Tucson,” State of Arizona Department of Education, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, June 11, 2007, www.scribd.com/doc/32001977/An-Open-Letter-to-the-Citizens-of-Tucson.
- ³⁴ Arizona H.B. 2281: 1, § 15-112, lines 8–16 (May 2010).
- ³⁵ Arizona Department of Education, “Superintendent of Public Instruction John Huppenthal Rules Tucson Unified School District Out of Compliance with A.R.S. § 15-112,” news release, July 15, 2011, available at www.azed.gov/public-relations/files/2011/08/pr06-15-11.pdf.
- ³⁶ Dylan Smith, “Huppenthal: TUSD’s Ethnic Studies Violate Law; Audit Says Otherwise,” *Tucson Sentinel*, June 16, 2011, www.tucsonsentinel.com/local/report/061511_ethnic_studies/huppenthal-tusds-ethnic-studies-violate-law-audit-says-otherwise/.
- ³⁷ Cambium Learning Inc., “Curriculum Audit.” Subsequent, independent research has also found that MAS students have significantly higher reading, writing, and math tests than their peers, and that two thirds enter college, a rate much higher than the overall national average, let alone the average for Latino students. Shawn Ginwright and Julio Cammarota, “Youth Organizing in the Wild West: Mobilizing for Educational Justice in Arizona!” *Voices in Urban Education* 30 (2011): 13–21.
- ³⁸ Curtis Acosta, “Tucson Mex-Am Studies News,” January 14, 2012, personal e-mail to lists.edliberation.org.
- ³⁹ “MAS ban in TUSD: Everything has been taken away, and it's awful,” California State at Northridge (CSUN) Delegation Meeting, Tucson, Arizona, February 25, 2012. www.youtube.com/watch?v=U1h0k2zU3Iw.
- ⁴⁰ See, for example, a litany of outrageous statements by Horne, Huppenthal, and citizens protesting ethnic studies captured in *Precious Knowledge*, DVD, directed by Ari Luis Palos (2011; Tucson, AZ: Dos Vatos Productions).
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, figure 10.
- ⁴² See Levinson, *No Citizen Left Behind*, chap. 2, for a review of this literature.
- ⁴³ Franc Contreras, “Arizona Bill Targets Ethnic Studies,” Al Jazeera English, January 28, 2011, www.youtube.com/watch?v=cM1NPH2Ii3Y.
- ⁴⁴ Meira Levinson, “The Civic Empowerment Gap: Defining the Problem and Locating Solutions,” in *Handbook of Research on Civic Engagement in Youth*, ed. Lonnie R. Sherrod, Judith Torney-Purta, and Constance A. Flanagan (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2010).
- ⁴⁵ Thelma Gutierrez, “Arizona Teacher: ‘We Don’t Teach Racism,’” *CNN*, September 14, 2011, edition.cnn.com/video/standard.html#/video/us/2011/09/14/pkg-az-ethnic-studies-ban.cnn. In a separate CNN interview, Horne repeatedly condemned teaching about racism and oppression as a “downer” to which students should not be subjected. AC360°, “Ethnic Studies Ban Racist?” *CNN*, May 13, 2011, ac360.blogs.cnn.com/2010/05/13/must-see-ac360-az-ethnic-studies-discussion.

⁴⁶ Levinson, *No Citizen Left Behind*, chaps. 1–3. See also Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998); Terrie Epstein, *Interpreting National History: Race, Identity, and Pedagogy in Classrooms and Communities (Teaching/Learning Social Justice)* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

⁴⁷ Dylan Smith, “Horne: TUSD Ethnic Studies Illegal,” *Tucson Sentinel*, January 3, 2011, www.tucsonsentinel.com/local/report/010311_ethnic_studies.